CLAIMS

The invention claimed is:

1.   A method for handling forms, comprising the steps of:

5   receiving a form from a form publisher comprising one or more data submission fields configured to receive user input;

processing the form to identify the data submission fields;

correlating each data field to a database field type supported by a database application;

10   creating one or more database tables or other database structures in the database application corresponding to the form, the structure comprising a storage element corresponding to each data submission field;

publishing the form to receive form submissions comprising data entries into the data submission fields;

15   receiving one or more form submissions; and

entering the data entries of the form submissions into the corresponding storage elements of the database.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

20   receiving a report file associated with the form, the report file comprising report elements associated with the storage elements of the database;

computing the report elements from the data entries associated with the storage elements of the database;

rendering the report; and

25   delivering the report to a specified location.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the form comprises the step of uploading the form from a remote form publisher.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving the form comprises the step of:

launching a forms wizard uploading; and

receiving user commands to the forms wizard to create the form.

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5. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of receiving the report comprises the step of uploading the report from a remote form publisher.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of receiving the report

10 comprises the step of:

launching a reports wizard uploading; and

receiving user commands to the forms wizard to create the report.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of processing the form to

15 identify the data submission fields comprises the steps of:

parsing the form to identify the data submission fields;

determining a field type associated with each data submission field; and

determining a name associated with each data submission field.

20 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of correlating each data field to a database field type supported by a database application comprises the steps of:

determining a field type associated with each data submission field;

looking up a selected database field type corresponding to each data submission field; and

25 correlating each data submission field with its corresponding selected database field type.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of correlating each data field to a database field type supported by a database application comprises the steps of:

determining a field type associated with each data submission field;

looking up a default database field type and a list of database field type options corresponding to each data submission field;

prompting the form published to enter a selected database field type from the

5 list of database field type options for each data submission field; and

correlating each data submission field with its corresponding selected database field type.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

10 receiving a report file associated with the form, the report file comprising report elements associated with the storage elements of the database structure;

receiving a service definition comprising instructions for producing and delivering reports based on the report file;

determining from the instructions that a report should be generated;

15 computing the report elements from the data entries associated with the storage elements of the database structure;

rendering the report; and

delivering the report to a specified location.

20 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

forwarding the form submissions to the form publisher for review; and

receiving approval of the form submissions prior to entering the data entries of the form submissions into the corresponding storage elements of the database structure.

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12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving form logic defining conditions associated with the receipt of form submissions using the form;

saving the form logic in association with the database structure corresponding to the form; and

applying the form logic when receiving form submissions using the form.

5   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein the form logic comprises:

conditions defining valid data entries for individual data submission fields; and

conditions defining a valid form submission based on a combination of data entries for several data submission fields.

10   14.   A computer storage medium storing computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

15.   A computer-controlled apparatus configured to perform the method of claim 1.

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16.   A method for handling forms, comprising the steps of:

receiving a form from a form publisher comprising one or more data submission fields configured to receive user input;

processing the form to identify the data submission fields;

5   correlating each data field to a database field type supported by a database application by determining a field type associated with each data submission field, looking up a default database field type and a list of database field type options corresponding to each data submission field, prompting the form published to enter a selected database field type from the list of database field type options for each data

10   submission field, and correlating each data submission field with its corresponding selected database field type;

creating a database structure in the database application corresponding to the form, the schema comprising a storage element corresponding to each data submission field;

15   publishing the form to receive form submissions comprising data entries into the data submission fields;

receiving one or more form submissions;

entering the data entries of the form submissions into the corresponding storage elements of the database;

20   receiving a report file associated with the form, the report file comprising report elements associated with the storage elements of the database table;

receiving a service definition comprising instructions for producing and delivering reports based on the report file;

determining from the instructions that a report should be generated;

25   computing the report elements from the data entries associated with the storage elements of the database;

rendering the report; and

delivering the report to a specified location.

17.   The method of claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

forwarding the form submissions to the form publisher for review; and

receiving approval of the form submissions prior to entering the data entries of

the form submissions into the corresponding storage elements of the database.

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18.   The method of claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

receiving form logic defining conditions associated with the receipt of form

submissions using the form;

saving the form logic in association with the database structure corresponding

10   to the form; and

applying the form logic when receiving form submissions using the form.

19.   The method of claim 18, wherein the form logic comprises:

conditions defining valid data entries for individual data submission fields; and

15   conditions defining a valid form submission based on a combination of data

entries for several data submission fields.

20.   A computer storage medium storing computer-executable instructions

for performing the method of claim 16.

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21.   A computer-controlled apparatus configured to perform the method of

claim 16.

22. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions comprising:

a document handler operable for receiving forms and associated report files, each form comprising one or more data submission fields configured to receive user
5   input, and each report file comprising report elements associated with the data submission fields of a corresponding form;

a forms database operable for storing a plurality of forms received through the document handler;

a reports database operable for storing a plurality of reports received through
10   the document handler;

a table loader operable for creating a database structure corresponding to each form, each database structure comprising a storage element corresponding to each data submission field in a corresponding form;

a forms manager operable for receiving one or more form submissions
15   associated with each form and entering data entries received through each form submission into the corresponding database table; and

the forms manager further operable for receiving a service definition associated with each form, and for producing and delivering reports based on the report file and database table corresponding to each form in accordance with
20   instructions contained in a corresponding service definition.

23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising: an interface system operable for receiving service definitions from one or more user communication devices selected from the group including:
25   a landline telephone;

a wireless telephone;

a computer; and

a digital broadband device.

24.   The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the document handler is operable for processing documents in a format selected from the group including:

an HTML document;

5   a PDF document;

an XML document; and

a word processing document.

25.   A computer-controlled apparatus comprising the computer storage

10   medium of claim 22.